

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of ~~playing a game~~operating a gaming system, said method comprising the steps of:

accepting a wager from a player;

presenting a main game including the step of displaying at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;

determining ~~the~~an outcome of said main game comprising comparing said main game hand to a set of predetermined winning hands;

if said main game hand is a predetermined winning hand, awarding said player a winning amount and determining if said winning hand corresponds to any of a plurality of predetermined category of a bonus event categories and, if so, ~~incrementing~~associating a value associated ~~with that~~the corresponding bonus category of said bonus event; and

~~playing said~~receiving an input from the player at a time after placing the wager, said input causing play of a bonus event, said play of said bonus event comprising ~~the~~a random selection of at least one of a plurality of the bonus categories, ~~of said bonus event~~ and awarding a bonus winning according to the value, if any, associated with the at least one selected bonus category, wherein said input is independent of whether the winning hand corresponds to any of the plurality of predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 2 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said main game comprises a game of video poker and said predetermined winning hands comprise poker hands.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The method in accordance with Claim 2 wherein said predetermined bonus categories of ~~said bonus event~~ comprise one or more of said predetermined winning hands.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The method in accordance with Claim 1 ~~wherein~~ which includes said play of said bonus event is automatically initiated ~~initiating said play of the bonus event~~ once a ~~winning hand corresponding to~~ value is associated with each of said predetermined bonus categories ~~has been received~~.

Claim 5 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 1 including multiplying said bonus winning by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The method in accordance with Claim 5 wherein said multiplier comprises ~~the~~ a sum of ~~the~~ a roll of two dice.

Claim 7 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 5 including the step of awarding a progressive award in the event said score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 8 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 5 including the step of awarding a progressive award if said score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method in accordance with Claim 1 ~~wherein if said wager is of a first amount, including~~ permitting play of said main game only and if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if said wager is of a second amount which exceeds said first amount; ~~permitting play of said main game and bonus event~~.

Claim 10 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 1 including the step of funding said bonus award from a portion of said wager.

Claim 11 (new): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

- (a) accepting a wager from a player;
- (b) displaying a main game including displaying at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;
- (c) determining an outcome of the main game including comparing the main game hand to a set of predetermined winning hands;
- (d) if the main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands:
 - (i) awarding the player a winning amount, and
 - (ii) determining if the winning hand corresponds to any of a plurality of predetermined bonus categories and, if so, associating one of a plurality of values with the corresponding bonus category, wherein said bonus categories include at least one bonus category which represents a combination of all of the values associated with the remaining bonus categories; and
- (e) receiving an input from the player at a time after placing the wager, said input causing play of a bonus event including:
 - (i) randomly selecting at least one of the bonus categories, and
 - (ii) awarding a bonus winning according to the value, if any, associated with at least one selected bonus category.

Claim 12 (new): The method of Claim 11, wherein the main game is a game of video poker and the predetermined winning hands are poker hands.

Claim 13 (new): The method of Claim 12, wherein the predetermined bonus categories include one or more of the predetermined winning hands.

Claim 14 (new): The method of Claim 11, which includes automatically initiating said play of the bonus event once a value is associated with each of the predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 15 (new): The method of Claim 11, which includes multiplying the bonus winning by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 16 (new): The method of Claim 15, wherein the multiplier is the sum of a roll of two dice.

Claim 17 (new): The method of Claim 15, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 18 (new): The method of Claim 15, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 19 (new): The method of Claim 11, which includes permitting the player to play the main game if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if the wager is of a second amount which exceeds the first amount.

Claim 20 (new): The method of Claim 11, which includes funding the bonus award from a portion of the wager.

Claim 21 (new): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) accepting a wager from a player;
- (b) presenting a main game including the step of displaying at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;
- (c) determining an outcome of said main game comprising comparing said main game hand to a set of predetermined winning hands;
- (d) if said main game hand is a predetermined winning hand, awarding said player a winning amount and determining if said winning hand corresponds to any of a plurality of predetermined bonus categories and, if so, associating a value with the corresponding bonus category; and
- (e) repeating steps (a) to (d) until an input is received from the player, said input causing play of a bonus event, said play of said bonus event comprising a random selection of at least one of the bonus categories, and awarding a bonus winning according to the value, if any, associated with the at least one selected bonus category.

Claim 22 (new): The method of Claim 21, which includes, after awarding the bonus winning, deleting each of the values, if any, associated with the predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 23 (new): The method of Claim 21, wherein the main game is a game of video poker and the predetermined winning hands are poker hands.

Claim 24 (new): The method of Claim 23, wherein the predetermined bonus categories include one or more of the predetermined winning hands.

Claim 25 (new): The method of Claim 21, which includes automatically initiating said play of the bonus event once a value is associated with each of the predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 26 (new): The method of Claim 21, which includes multiplying the bonus winning by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 27 (new): The method of Claim 26, wherein the multiplier is the sum of a roll of two dice.

Claim 28 (new): The method of Claim 26, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 29 (new): The method of Claim 26, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 30 (new): The method of Claim 21, which includes permitting the player to play the main game if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if the wager is of a second amount which exceeds the first amount.

Claim 31 (new): The method of Claim 21, which includes funding the bonus award from a portion of the wager.